



Background Information

The Chalmette Battlefield Task Force (referred to interchangeably as CBTF or task force) was designated a federal advisory committee by the Secretary of the Interior on August 23, 2002. The purpose of the CBTF, as stated in its charter, was to provide the National Park Service (NPS) with recommendations for potential improvements to the artifacts and facilities within the boundary of the Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery (referred to interchangeably as CBNC or park). A copy of the CBTF charter is provided in Attachment A of this document.

Members of the CBTF were appointed by the Secretary from a wide range of federal, state, and local government agencies, non government organizations, and local stakeholders. Task force meetings were conducted every other month for a period of 24 months at either the park or the St. Bernard Parish Government Complex. Public notice for all meetings was published in the *Federal Register* and the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, a regional newspaper with distribution generally covering the State of Louisiana. Meeting minutes were recorded and made available for public review to ensure public access and involvement.

Task force members gathered information about site conditions through detailed site inspections and continuous dialogue with local stakeholders and park personnel. Upon the conclusion of their deliberations, a list of draft recommendations was created and refined. Task force members approved a final list of recommendations by majority vote at its August 18, 2004 meeting. The CBTF's final report (provided in Attachment B) was delivered to the Federal Designated Officer on August 23, 2004.

The Secretary directed the NPS to analyze the recommendations of the task force and prepare a plan of action. This document fulfills that responsibility using one or more of the following approaches:

1. Some NPS Action Plan (AP) responses indicate that the park has already taken steps to address the referenced concern. In most cases, such actions were initiated in response to preliminary discussions and recommendations by task force members expressed during their bi-monthly meetings in 2003 and 2004.
2. The AP also describes NPS actions that will be initiated in the near future or as soon as appropriate funding is acquired. In many cases, these actions represent the first steps toward a more comprehensive and complex future action.
3. Some AP responses propose future NPS actions. In most cases, such responses are tied to the ongoing General Management Plan Amendment and Development Concept Plan (GMP/DCP) process and indicate that further data gathering and public consultation must occur before a preferred implementation strategy can be determined.

Integrating NPS Action Plan and GMP/DCP

Many of the task force's recommendations involve complex cultural and natural resource management issues. Given the sensitive nature of park resources, we believe it is prudent to investigate a range of alternative strategies before identifying a preferred NPS action. In order to study these issues more thoroughly and solicit additional input from some of our other planning partners, the NPS plans to integrate them into the GMP/DCP planning process.

The NPS multi-disciplinary team responsible for conducting the GMP/DCP has worked closely with the CBTF for over 12 months to develop and refine a range of potential improvements for consideration by all of our planning partners. The planning team would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation to each member of the task force for their active participation and valuable contributions to the scoping and alternative development phases of the project.

The NPS will respond accurately and in good faith to each concern expressed by the CBTF. To ensure a clear integration of actions proposed in the AP and GMP/DCP, the CBTF final report and this AP will be incorporated into the GMP/DCP as an appendix. In addition, a reference table will be provided in the GMP/DCP so readers can quickly cross reference recommendations and proposed actions from one document to another.

An overview of general management plans and development concept plans is presented in the following paragraphs.

General Management Amendment Planning

A GMP Amendment clarifies and articulates the future goals and objectives to be achieved at a park over a 15- to 20-year period. Based on guidance from its enabling legislation, information and suggestions gathered during consultations, and a consideration of potential environmental impacts, a variety of management alternatives are developed. A range of prescriptive management zones is often developed and overlaid in different combinations within the park to reflect the intent or focus of each alternative. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) serves to enhance stakeholder understanding of the various advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and, ultimately, as a tool for selecting a preferred course of action.

A GMP Amendment is conducted by a multi-disciplinary planning team of NPS managers, technical support personnel and park staff. As part of the planning process, the planning team typically reconfirms the park's purpose, significance, and mission goals and consults with federal, state, and local governmental agencies, interested parties, and the general public. Full and open public participation is promoted to encourage a sense of public ownership and confidence in the decision making process.

Development Concept Planning

A DCP makes a more detailed analysis of a park, structure, or specific area within a park. Based on the framework established by its enabling legislation, the CBNC DCP will identify a range of alternative designs that illustrate how proposed developments could be implemented. A preferred alternative will be selected based on information gathered during consultation and a consideration of potential environmental impacts. Potentially significant environmental impacts will be documented and analyzed in the GMP EIS. While still schematic in nature, the conceptual designs of a DCP are expected to provide a level of detail that will enable a future team of architects and engineers to prepare construction documents and specifications to implement the recommended actions.

NPS Action Plan

The following section describes NPS responses and proposed actions for each recommendation in the CBTF final report. Task force recommendations are highlighted in italics. NPS responses and proposed actions follow each recommendation in plain type. For easier reference, NPS responses employ the same numbering and lettering system as the final report.

CBTF Recommendation 1A

"Sign in sheets vs. comment sheets should be available. Valuable marketing information including where people are visiting from and how they heard of the battlefield could be analyzed and used to promote the park."

NPS Action for Recommendation 1A

We agree with the CBTF about the benefits of clearly understanding visitors and visitor preferences. Who visits Chalmette Battlefield? When do they come, where do they come from, and what do they look for? Who doesn't visit, and why? These are compelling questions whose answers would likely influence the full spectrum of management decisions at the park.

Periodic visitor studies are prepared for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve by the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit. The most recent study was conducted in the spring of 1998, had a sample size of 776, and a 72% response rate. An analysis of the study data indicates that, generally, most persons who visited Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve were first time

visitors, came as part of a family group, were between the ages of 41-65, received information about the park from friends or relatives, and had a special interest in southern Louisiana history and culture. Persons were most likely to visit the French Quarter visitor center, Chalmette Battlefield, or Barataria Preserve (29%, 26%, and 24%, respectively) and the facilities most used by visitors were visitor centers and restrooms. Unfortunately, the 1998 study provides only limited site specific information about Chalmette because most of the analysis is reported in the context of the greater Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

In response to the CBTF's recommendation, the park will take the following actions:

1. Pursue placement of NPS sign-in visitor register at an appropriate location within the existing visitor center.
2. A copy of the 1998 study will be provided to the Chalmette Parish Department of Tourism for their use and record.
3. A future comprehensive visitor use study specifically focused on the CBNC will be recommended in the GMP/DCP. Study options will include, but not be limited to, focusing the existing NPS survey instrument on CBNC, using private contractors or other specialists to conduct a similar study, and/or a study of community-wide visitor trends in partnership with St. Bernard Parish or another local or regional government entity. The cost and feasibility of various options will be discussed in the GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 1B

"Tourists could be provided with information about the local area and its attractions."

NPS Action for Recommendation 1B

National parks have been interwoven with tourism and the tourism industry from the earliest days of the National Park System. Park managers recognize that it is in the best interest of the NPS and the CBNC to understand and actively communicate with local and regional tourism businesses and those who visit the parks as tourists. It is important for our friends and partners in the local community to understand that visitor safety and protection of park resources must be the highest priority of any national park. Our desire to maintain obstruction free circulation patterns in the visitor center and to preserve essential park resources unimpaired for future generations sometimes limits the park's ability to meet the marketing desires of the commercial tourism industry at CBNC.

In response to the CBTF's recommendations, the park will continue or initiate the following actions:

1. While remaining mindful of the limitations imposed by law and policy, NPS planners and designers will identify new opportunities in each GMP/DCP alternative that enhance park visitors' awareness of local area attractions.
2. The park will continue to provide information about local area attractions to park visitors by displaying and distributing the St. Bernard Parish Department of Tourism brochure in the visitor center and by strengthening our partnership relationships with the St. Bernard Parish Department of Tourism and other local and regional park stakeholders.
3. The Crescent City District Interpretive Supervisor will continue to serve as a member of the St. Bernard Parish Tourism Advisory Board which meets bi-monthly throughout the year.
4. The Crescent City District Interpretive Supervisor's position description and employment performance standards will continue to include requirements to develop and maintain positive working relationships with surrounding communities, existing and potential park partners, and educational institutions. As part of this requirement, the Crescent City District Interpretive Supervisor will continue to engage community leaders, state and local officials, and other park stakeholders to share program and event information, discuss emerging trends in tourism, identifying mutually beneficial opportunities to engage tourists, and brainstorming ideas for the park.

CBTF Recommendation 1C

“Install an elevated river-front overview in the area of the Malus-Beauregard house for visitors to appreciate the important roll the Mississippi River played in the Battle of New Orleans.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 1C

The CBTF’s recommendation on this issue echoes and reinforces similar advice we have received from other park stakeholders during public scoping meetings for the GMP/DCP. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. The NPS planning and design team will determine the feasibility of developing a river-front overview feature in the GMP/DCP. If feasible, a range of design options will be developed and analyzed.
2. The park will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the range of design options and consider, in good faith, all recommendations or suggestions for improvements to the concepts being considered.
3. A final recommendation for creating a river-front overview will be presented and the rationale for that decision justified in the GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 1D

“We would support the placement of commemorative markers around the base of the monument to acknowledge the participation of all militia/troops engaged on the American side of the Battle of New Orleans.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 1D

The park appreciates the support of the task force on this issue. New commemorative markers recognizing the diverse groups of regulars and civilians who fought for the United States at the Battle of New Orleans will be dedicated in a special ceremony on January 8, 2005 during the 190th anniversary of the battle.

CBTF Recommendation 1E

“Park Benches could be placed around park where visitors can rest.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 1E

The CBTF’s recommendation on this issue echoes and reinforces similar advice we have received from other park stakeholders during public scoping meetings for the GMP/DCP. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. Up to 5 additional benches will be purchased and temporarily placed in appropriate locations throughout the park in 2005.
2. The NPS planning and design team will define a strategy to consider the placement of additional future benches in the GMP/DCP.
3. The park will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the strategy and, in good faith, take into consideration all recommendations or suggestions for each alternative being considered.
4. A final strategy will be identified in the final GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 1F

“Let community know about the availability of the battlefield for events and meetings.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 1F

NPS facilities may be used for special events and meetings (36 CFR Chapter1, Section 2.50) provided there is a meaningful association between the park area and the event and the event contributes to visitor understanding of the park and its mission. The facilities at CBNC have always been available for pubic use when the proposed activities conform to established guidelines. Unfortunately, the battlefield landscape is a very sensitive environment and only one small indoor multi-use space in the

existing visitor center is suitable for meetings. Under present circumstances, the park feels it would be misleading to widely advertise the availability of park facilities for special events or meetings when it does not, in most instances, have the capacity to accommodate those requests.

Providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment is a goal of the park and an important part of the NPS mission. However, the laws governing the management of national parks are very clear that the first responsibility of park managers is to protect park resources and values and, correspondingly, to manage all uses for those purposes. Because park managers cannot knowingly authorize a park use that would harm park resources, requests for uses that could potentially cause negative or adverse impacts must be fully evaluated, appropriate public involvement obtained, and a compelling management need demonstrated before any significant activity can be permitted.

If the potential impact of a requested use is not known or in doubt, the Superintendent must protect the park's resources. To help park managers better assess the potential for negative impacts, a special-use permitting system is used. The park understands that the laws and policies governing the public use of NPS facilities can be complex and that this may sometimes lead to misunderstandings about what types of uses can and cannot be permitted. The following actions will be undertaken to enhance communication and understanding between the park and local stakeholders about this issue:

1. The park will continue to make its existing park facilities available for public use within the guidelines of law and policy.
2. The park will prepare a short and concise information guide or pamphlet that clarifies its position on special uses, the facilities available, and the special use permitting process. This information will be provided on the park web page and otherwise as appropriate.
3. The NPS planning and design team will identify alternate ways of increasing the park's ability to accommodate appropriate community events and meetings in the GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 1G

"The visitor center should be enlarged or relocated to provide more space for various activities."

NPS Action for Recommendation 1G

The CBTF's recommendation on this issue echoes and reinforces similar advice we received from other park stakeholders during public scoping meetings for the GMP/DCP. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. The NPS planning and design team will determine the feasibility of enlarging and/or relocating the visitor center as part of the GMP/DCP. If feasible, a range of design options will be developed and analyzed.
2. The park will provide the public an opportunity to comment on the range of design options and consider, in good faith, all recommendations or suggestions for improvements to the concepts being considered.
3. A final recommendation for enlarging and/or relocating the visitor center will be presented and the rationale for that decision justified in the final GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 2A

"Chalmette needs improved maintenance on a continuous basis to maintain the grounds properly. Having a regular maintenance crew who can concentrate on just the Chalmette Park would alleviate a lot of these concerns."

NPS Action for Recommendation 2A

The CBNC employs five full time maintenance workers. While members of the park maintenance staff occasionally assist on projects at other locations, NPS records indicate that over 95% of their total working hours are spent training for or directly working on projects at the CBNC. Based on recommendations provided by the CBTF prior to publishing its final report, the Maintenance Division and Resource Management Division have redefined grooming standards for the park grounds. The maintenance staff began implementing the revised standards in spring 2004. Also, additional

maintenance staffing needs will be evaluated based on the range of alternatives considered in the GMP/DCP process.

CBTF Recommendation 2B

“The historic trees need maintaining; the grass needs cutting properly; cemetery headstones need straightening, cleaning, and better manicuring.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 2B

Specific project funding has been requested in the 2005-2010 combined budget request for pruning and lightning protection for all of the large oak trees in the CBNC.

Please also refer to NPS Actions 2A and 2C.

CBTF Recommendation 2C

“The wall around the cemetery needs repair.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 2C

The park completed a comprehensive condition assessment of the Chalmette National Cemetery in 2004. The Cemetery Condition Assessment Report provides a detailed analysis of the cemetery wall, iron fencing and gates, monuments and headstones and makes a variety of treatment recommendations to stabilize the wall, clean and straighten the headstones, and correct drainage issues.

In addition, all recommendations contained in the Cemetery Condition Assessment Report will be incorporated by reference into the GMP/DCP document. A copy of the final Cemetery Condition Assessment Report will be provided to the chairperson of the CBTF for her use and record.

Please also refer to NPS Action 2E.

CBTF Recommendation 2D

“A plan for better drainage should be developed.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 2D

The mild slope and poor drainage characteristics of the soil make it very difficult to provide effective drainage at this time. However, the park has long recognized that storm water management is an important issue both on the battlefield and in the cemetery. To provide future relief, the park has been working cooperatively with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) and the Lake Borgne Levee District to ensure that the storm drainage improvements currently being installed along the St. Bernard Highway will provide adequate outfall connections from the battlefield and cemetery for future corrective actions.

The corrective actions that need to be taken will not be known precisely until a preferred alternative is identified in the GMP/DCP. Consequently, corrective actions must be delayed until the completion of that planning process.

CBTF Recommendation 2E

“The Task Force would support implementation of the recommendations of the Cemetery Assessment Report.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 2E

The park appreciates the support of the CBTF on this issue. Recommendations in the report have resulted in a \$3.2 million line item construction budget request for implementation of the preferred alternative. This budget request has been approved by the Washington Office of Construction and Budget and is currently in the formulated 2008 Interior budget request.

CBTF Recommendation 3A

“Change or enhance the sign at the front of the park; perhaps, put an additional sign on the median in front of or across from the entrance to the battlefield.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 3A

Based on recommendations provided by the CBTF prior to publishing its final report, the entrance signs at the battlefield and cemetery entrances were upgraded in 2003. Also, a variety of landscape design alternatives that further enhance the entrances are being considered in the GMP/DCP.

A comprehensive strategy to address signage and directional issues outside the park was prepared by the park staff in 2003. Implementation of the plan’s recommendations is dependent on future funding and approval of the proposed sign design and locations by LADOTD. LADOTD has sole jurisdiction over all roadway and highway directional signage decisions.

The NPS will continue to work with LADOTD on this issue. In the interim, the designs and implementation strategy prepared in 2003 will be updated to reflect current standards, and incorporated as an appendix in the GMP/DCP for consideration by future planners and park managers.

CBTF Recommendation 3B

“Eliminate some vegetation in order to open a view of the battlefield from St. Bernard Highway.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 3B

The potential for opening selected views into the park will be fully explored in the GMP/DCP. All alternatives will include proposals to enhance views and update the park entrance features on the St. Bernard Highway.

CBTF Recommendation 3C

“Consider lighting the monument.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 3C

A lighting system for the Chalmette Monument was donated to the park in 1968 by the St. Bernard Parish Business and Professional Women’s Association. The system consisted of four pedestals, each supporting two mercury-vapor lamps. Lighting of the monument was discontinued to conserve electricity during the energy crisis of the early 1970s. When turned back on in 1976, it was discovered that two mercury-vapor lamps were inoperative. The park continued to light the monument using the remaining operational units until 1978 when additional lamps began to fail. Cost estimates to repair or replace the 10-year old system exceeded available funding and given the large annual expenditure for electricity, it was abandoned and removed.

Given that significant advancements in lighting technology and energy conservation have occurred since the 1970’s, the planning and design team will examine the feasibility of installing a modern accent lighting system for the monument as part of the GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 4A

“The Malus-Beauregard House could be used as an interpretive site for the other events associated with the cultural landscape and history of the site. The Malus-Beauregard House would be a proper location to tell the story of Fazendeville and to present interpretive mention of the architectural style of the house to the river plantations, stressing the connection to General Beauregard as a former owner.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 4A

A wide variety of potential uses and treatments for the Malus-Beauregard House, including opportunities to interpret the history of its occupancy and the Fazendeville community has been

suggested by park staff and other stakeholders during public scoping for the GMP/DCP. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. Based on suggestions from the CBTF and other stakeholders, the planning and design team is developing a range of feasible alternative uses and interpretive themes for the Malus-Beauregard House as part of the GMP/DCP.
2. The planning and design team will provide all stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the range of alternatives developed and, in good faith, take into consideration additional recommendations or suggestions for change or improvement.
3. A final recommendation on the future use of the Malus-Beauregard House will be documented and justified in the GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 4B

“Restoration and furnishing of the house, first and second floors, would add to its charm.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 4B

Please refer to NPS Action 4A and 4C.

CBTF Recommendation 4C

“Climate control would further ensure that the house and its furnishings would be preserved for future generations. The house could then be used for social functions.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 4C

The planning and design team will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of a range of alternative uses and interpretive treatments for the Malus-Beauregard House in the GMP/DCP (See also NPS Action 1F and 4A). None the less, many obstacles stand in the way of returning climate control and restored historic furnishings to the Malus-Beauregard House.

The interior spaces of the Malus-Beauregard House were climate controlled when the structure served as the park visitor center from the early 1970s until the early 1980s. NPS experience with the Malus-Beauregard House during this period and with similar structures at other NPS units in the Southeast Region suggests that returning a climate control system without also installing a vapor barrier would likely cause significant sweating or wicking of moisture into the interior rooms. This conclusion is based on the following discussion.

Because it is a gas, moisture vapor always moves from high to lower pressure areas. This normally means it tends to diffuse from the higher humidity levels of a building's interior toward the lower humidity levels outside. This flow is reversed when hot, humid conditions exist outdoors and a building's interior spaces are cool – which is the existing condition at Chalmette during much of the year.

Most building materials offer little resistance to the passage of moisture vapor. This is particularly true for the Malus-Beauregard House whose exterior walls are constructed of unusually permeable brick and whose slab floor sits only 18 inches above the high water table. Without the installation of a vapor barrier, cooling the Malus-Beauregard House's interior spaces will draw moisture vapor from the humid outside air and underlying saturated soil through its walls and floor. When this humid air comes into contact with the cool surfaces inside the structure, it will condense from gas to liquid and collect on the interior wall surfaces and interior furnishings. The constant presence of moisture on these surfaces will cause unacceptable damage to both the wall and furniture finishes. Over time, uncontrolled condensation may also promote conditions favorable to mold and fungus growth which could deteriorate the wooden beams and joists supporting the structure's upper levels and exterior porches.

Placing a vapor barrier on the outer surfaces of the structure's brick walls, though technically feasible, would necessitate covering or replacing the brick walls. Adding a vapor barrier to interior spaces would require the construction of a ventilated interior wall system – essentially an interior shell between the exterior walls and interior spaces. Installing a ventilated wall system would be

problematic on the restored first floor but could be carried off with somewhat less impact on the upper levels. The expense associated with installing such a system would be substantially higher than traditional construction and very difficult to justify in a cost-benefit analysis.

The structural integrity of the Malus-Beauregard House has been examined by NPS engineers and architects. Overall, the building is structurally sound. The upper level framework of the building was never designed to support large groups of people and NPS estimates suggest that no more than 20 persons can be safely accommodated on the second and third levels at one time.

Given the likelihood that returning air conditioning to the Malus-Beauregard House will prove impracticable, the GMP/DCP planning and design team will explore the potential of using humidity resistant reproduction period furniture in some or all of the home's interior spaces.

CBTF Recommendation 4D

"Reactivating of the Little Colonels, who wore ante-bellum period dresses and served as docents at the house in the past, would further enhance the use of the house and be an interesting visitor attraction."

NPS Action for Recommendation 4D

The NPS agrees that programs featuring persons dressed in period appropriate clothing greatly enhance the understanding of historical events among our visitors and serve as a significant tourism attraction. The park interpretive staff welcomes the participation of volunteers of all ages and its long and successful history of supporting interpretive programs that involve persons dressed in period clothing speaks to the park's strong commitment to this form of education and communication. Presently, the NPS planning and design team is considering a variety of alternatives in the GMP/DCP that provide additional opportunities for interested persons to actively participate in these types of "living-history" programs. Historic areas such as the reconstructed rampart and Malus-Beauregard House are ideal locations for such programs.

However, with due respect for the historical importance of the late antebellum period in St. Bernard Parish, the park's interpretive program must remain focused on educating visitors about events associated with the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Clothing fashions typically worn by persons in 1815 were significantly different than those worn by persons in the 1860s. Persons dressed in late ante-bellum period clothing, as were the "Little Colonels," would confuse rather than educate visitors about the park's period of significance.

CBTF Recommendation 5A

"The rampart and cannons are the visual reference points that connect the battle to the visitor's experience. It would be beneficial to purchase cannon for every gun emplacement in the ramparts."

NPS Action for Recommendation 5A

The addition of historically accurate artillery pieces would help communicate the significance and magnitude of the battle to visitors. However, when contemplating the placement of additional artillery pieces, one must also consider the cost of acquisition (reproduction cannons typically range between \$25,000 and \$50,000) and the need to determine accurate historic dimensions of the rampart at the time of the battle. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. Identify and undertake the archival and archeological research needed to determine historically accurate dimensions and materials used to construct the rampart as well as the locations and dimensions of the various gun embrasures positioned along the rampart.
2. Acquire historically accurate artillery pieces as funding allows.
3. Analyze a variety of alternative strategies to reconstruct portions of the rampart and include the addition of historically accurate artillery pieces in the GMP/DCP.

4. Provide an opportunity for public comment on the range of alternatives and consider, in good faith, all recommendations or suggestions for improvement.
5. The range of alternatives considered, potential environmental impacts, and the NPS recommended action will be documented and justified in the final GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 5B

“Wooden timbers should be replaced in the ramparts.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 5B

Funding to replace the existing wooden battens of the rampart has been obtained. However, replacing the battens has been delayed pending additional data gathering and consideration of a wider range of potential options in the GMP/DCP.

The planning and design team is currently re-examining the most current archeological information to gain a clearer understanding of the rampart’s historic dimensions and the precise locations of gun embrasures. Potential construction and maintenance costs are also an important consideration. A recommendation about the most suitable construction materials will be included in the GMP/DCP.

Please also refer also to NPS Action 5A.

CBTF Recommendation 5C

“The height of the ramparts should be increased.”

NPS Action for Recommendation for Recommendation 5C

Please refer to NPS Actions 5A and 5B.

CBTF Recommendation 5D

“Audio or multi-media stations on the ramparts should be added. More information should include the Naval segments of the campaign. Much of the larger story needs to be interpreted. Some specific points stressed would be the context of the entire campaign in St. Bernard Parish, the effect of the battle on the nation, and why control of the Port of New Orleans was so significant to the nation.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 5D

The use of a wide variety of potential alternative interpretive media techniques has been expressed by park staff and stakeholders during the public consultation phase of the GMP/DCP. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. Fully explore the CBTF’s recommendations along with recommendations documented during scoping about alternative ways to interpret the rampart, naval actions, regional and national contexts, and other battle related events in the GMP/DCP.
2. Describe the potential options and provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the range of design options. Consider all comments, ideas, recommendations, and suggestions for improvement, in good faith, and incorporate them into the alternatives as appropriate.
3. Document the range of alternatives considered, potential environmental impacts, and the NPS recommended action in the Chalmette Battlefield GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 5E

“The flag pole should be relocated and refurbished and should fly the 15 star flag.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 5E

The park currently flies the historic 15-star flag on special occasions and the contemporary 50-star flag on other days. We believe flying the 15-star flag should reflect a consideration of its relationship to the historic scene.

Several alternative locations for the flag pole are being considered in the GMP/DCP. At this point, it is expected that the frequency of flying the 15-star flag will increase with proximity to major historic

resource elements. That is, a flag pole at a new contemporary visitor center would likely fly the 15-star flag only on special occasions and a flag pole associated with interpreting the reconstructed rampart might fly the 15-star flag almost exclusively. The planning and design team will remain open to further suggestions on this issue as the GMP/DCP planning process continues.

The CBTF's recommendation on this issue echoes and reinforces similar advice received from other park stakeholders during public scoping meetings for the GMP/DCP. In response, the park will take the following actions:

1. The NPS planning and design team will develop a range of alternative flag pole locations in the GMP/DCP.
2. The park will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the alternative locations and, in good faith, take into consideration all recommendations or suggestions for each alternative being considered.
3. A final recommendation for relocating the flag pole will be presented and the rationale for that decision justified in the final GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 5F

"An interpretation of the flank movements of the British could be available."

NPS Action for Recommendation 5F

We agree. However, space limitations at the existing visitor center prevent the installation of large interpretive displays on this subject at the present time. Please also refer to NPS Action 1G and 5D.

CBTF Recommendation 6A

"The Task Force should be a permanent advisory committee consisting of Task Force Members whereby regular meetings are scheduled and issues addressed that the Park Superintendent is required to attend."

NPS Action for Recommendation 6A

The CBTF successfully completed its mission and submitted a final report before its charter expired on August 23, 2004. The park does not have the authority to create a new task force or advisory group.

Guided by the Federal Advisory Commission Act (FACA), the project manager for the Chalmette Battlefield GMP/DCP will continue to consult with members of the CBTF as private citizens and work, in good faith, to incorporate the recommendations of the CBTF into the decision making process.

The Superintendent of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve will propose a one day annual meeting between park managers and the St. Bernard Parish President and other parish government officials to coordinate planning efforts, exchange information and ideas, and identify issues of mutual interest or concern. The Superintendent will outline her proposal in a letter to the parish President by January 1, 2005.

CBTF Recommendation 6B

"Reevaluate the mission statement of the park addressing not only how the park should be historically interpreted, but also how to promote the importance of the events in an interesting manner, creating an atmosphere whereby visitors want to return."

NPS Action for Recommendation 6B

Each unit of the National Park System is provided guidance for how it is to be managed by the Presidential proclamation or Congressional legislation that authorizes and establishes it. The proclamation or legislation creating a park unit is further interpreted by the NPS and expressed as its mission. Park missions are composed of three kinds of statements: mission, purpose, and significance which collectively provide the foundation for sound decision-making at the park.

Park mission statements for the CNBC are currently being reevaluated as part of the GMP/DCP planning process. The revised statements below were shared with the public in a February 2004 newsletter, during public meetings, and via the park web site.

Mission Statement:

The Chalmette Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve is dedicated to commemorating the lives and stories of those soldiers and civilians who participated in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Their legacy and contribution to American independence is honored through the interpretation of historic and contemporary cultural resources at the Chalmette Battlefield and Chalmette National Cemetery.

Purpose Statements:

Purpose statements reaffirm the reasons for which the park was set aside as part of the National Park System. They are intended to document NPS's assumptions about what the park's establishing legislation really means so that those assumptions can be understood by others.

The purpose of Chalmette Battlefield and Chalmette National Cemetery is:

- To honor and commemorate those who fought and died to preserve American independence at the Battle of New Orleans.
- To care for and manage the archeological artifacts, historic structures, and other objects of historic and scientific importance for the benefit of future generations through preservation, interpretation, education, and inspiration.

Significance Statements:

Significance statements clearly describe the regional, national, or global significance of those park resources that preserve a portion of America's heritage. Significance statements help the NPS identify what is most important about the park and prioritize the allocation of limited funding and staff resources accordingly.

The Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery is significant because it:

- Contains archeological and cultural landscape remnants of one of the most significant battlefields of the War of 1812.
- Commemorates a dramatic turning point in the development of the United States where European influence on the Mississippi River was ended and the path for western migration and settlement opened.
- Is associated with the military actions of Andrew Jackson who, as a result of his stunning victory at the Battle of New Orleans, became a national hero and began his political journey to the 7th U.S. Presidency.
- Honors and memorializes the military service of over 10 generations of American soldiers.

To further address this and related recommendations about mission statements, the park will undertake the following actions:

- The planning and design team will continue to solicit public comment on the revised statements and consider, in good faith, all recommendations or suggestions for improvements to the statements as part of the public scoping requirement.
- Revised mission statements will be documented in the GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 6C

“Archeological resources, although not a visible resource, are indeed present and should be interpreted even if only by wayside exhibits.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 6C

The park joins the CBTF in acknowledging the presence and historic significance of archeological resources at the CNBC. A variety of interpretive methods to highlight these important resources are being explored in the alternative development phase of the Chalmette Battlefield GMP/DCP.

CBTF Recommendation 6D

“This advisory committee and or Task Force should not be disbanded until another advisory committee is authorized or appointed.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 6D

Please refer to NPS Actions 1F, 4A, and 6A.

CBTF Recommendation 7A

“Incorporated in the permanent advisory committee would be a plan to meet the needs and requests of groups that want to use the park for various activities.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 7A

Please also refer to NPS Actions 1F, 4A, and 6A.

CBTF Recommendation 7B

“Information of upcoming events should be communicated to volunteers.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 7B

We agree that communication between the park and all park stakeholders, including volunteers, is important. Upcoming events at the CNBC are continuously highlighted in the semi annual park newspaper, on the park web site, and via special flyers at the information desk located in the visitor center. Other methods of communication, must, of course, reflect a consideration of staff time and fund availability and will continue to be considered on a case by case basis.

Please also refer to NPS Actions 1B, 1F, and 10B for additional actions intended to enhance communication between the park and park stakeholders.

CBTF Recommendation 7C

“ROTC should be apprentices of the living history volunteers so that they can be properly trained in the interpretation techniques regarding this battle.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 7C

2005 is the fourth year that the park has partnered with New Orleans schools to train local high school JROTC cadets to portray soldiers and civilians from the Battle of New Orleans during living history events at the Chalmette Battlefield and elsewhere. The free men of color of New Orleans formed two battalions that fought during the battle and were noted for their excellent marksmanship.

To be successful, interpretive and educational programs at the park must continue to be based on current scholarship and research about the history, science, and condition of park resources as well as research about the needs, expectations, and behavior of visitors. To accomplish this, a dialogue must be established and maintained among interpreters, education specialists, resource managers, scientists, curators, archeologists, sociologists, ethnographers, historians, and other experts for the purpose of offering the most current and accurate programs to the public.

Within the limits imposed by funding and personnel, the park interpretive staff will continue to be available and eager to engage in a constructive dialogue with all persons whose perspectives may enhance the park's interpretive programs. However, to ensure quality control and the appropriateness of interpretive programs at the park, NPS policy requires that the park's interpretive staff be involved

in the planning, approval, training, monitoring, and evaluation of all interpretive services provided by others at the park.

CBTF Recommendation 8A

“Coordinate a cooperative effort transit system with the St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit (SBURT) and Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in New Orleans. This would allow a convenient method of transit for visitors to access the National Park in addition to the river boat.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 8A

The park joins the CBTF in acknowledging the potential benefit of a cooperative transportation arrangement and will explore potential options with SBURT, RTA, and private coach operators as part of the GMP/DCP alternative development process.

CBTF Recommendation 9A

“Allowing the park to be used before and after park hours would offer recreational opportunities such as cycling, jogging, walking, and bird watching.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 9A

The Chalmette Battlefield has historically been used for a variety of compatible community recreation uses. Park managers have no desire to restrict access to the park outside of normal operating hours as long as these activities continue to contribute to the overall mission of the park and do not negatively affect park resources or the fundamental historic integrity of the site. Recreational activities such as skate boarding, sun bathing, kite flying, driver’s training, and off road bicycle riding represent the types of recreational activities that would be considered inappropriate at any time because of their potentially negative impact to the historic scene. Visitors in the Chalmette National Cemetery will continue to be encouraged to conduct themselves in a manner befitting the solemn and dignified nature of the site.

CBTF Recommendation 9B

“The park should be available for special public events.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 9B

Please refer to NPS Action 1F.

CBTF Recommendation 10A

“The Chalmette National Battlefield and the Chalmette National Cemetery would have its own personnel to address the issues of maintaining the facilities.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 10A

Please refer to NPS Action 2A

CBTF Recommendation 10B

“Local concerns unique to the park would be addressed on a regular basis.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 10B

Improved communication between the park and its neighbors is fundamental to successfully addressing this recommendation. The park will enhance its ability to communicate and respond to the concerns of its local stakeholders with the following actions:

1. Guided by the Federal Advisory Commission Act (FACA), the project manager for the Chalmette Battlefield GMP/DCP will continue to consult with members of the CBTF as private citizens and work, in good faith, to incorporate the recommendations of the CBTF into the decision making process.
2. The Superintendent of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve will propose a one day annual meeting between park managers and the St. Bernard Parish President and other parish government officials to coordinate planning efforts, exchange information and ideas,

and identify issues of mutual interest or concern. The Superintendent will outline her proposal in a letter to the parish President by January 1, 2005.

CBTF Recommendation 11A

“Through a joint effort with local, state, and federal agencies, exhibits and literature concerning Louisiana coastal erosion issues could be available at the joint local and federal visitor center at the Chalmette Battlefield and Chalmette Cemetery site.”

NPS Action for Recommendation 11A

The park shares the CBTF’s concern about coastal erosion in Louisiana and will incorporate this suggestion into one or more of the alternatives analyzed in the GMP/DCP.

Conclusion

The NPS extends its sincere appreciation to those government officials, business leaders, and park neighbors who participated as task force members over the past 24 months. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of Chairperson Elizabeth McDougall and Vice Chairperson Bonnie Pepper Cook whose leadership and commitment to partnership were essential to completing the work of the task force. The recommendations contained in this action plan and the task force final report serve admirably as a reminder of the many benefits of cooperative decision making and our mutual commitment to good stewardship of the historic resources that make Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery and Chalmette Parish such special places. We look forward with great anticipation to the continued involvement of those who served on the task force and other park stakeholders as we work, together, to complete the park’s GMP/DCP and prepare for the bicentennial anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans in 2015.